

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this Proposed Resource Management Plan (Proposed RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to provide direction for managing the King Range National Conservation Area (KRNCA) and associated public lands (see Figure 1-1), and to analyze the environmental effects resulting from implementing the Proposed RMP. The King Range Act (Public Law 91-476) established the nation's first National Conservation Area (NCA), on October 21, 1970 (Appendix A). The Act represented the culmination of years of effort to protect the area, beginning in 1929 when it was first withdrawn by Executive Order from deposition or sale, pending classification for protected status. The 1970 Act directs the BLM to complete "a comprehensive, balanced, and coordinated plan of land use, development, and management...based on an inventory and evaluation of the available resources and requirements for such resources, and on the topography and other features of the area." This Proposed RMP has been developed to meet that mandate by updating and expanding the area's original 1974 Management Program.

The Draft Resource Management Plan/EIS (Draft RMP) was published on January 16, 2004. This Proposed RMP/Final EIS is an abbreviated document, in that the contents of the entire Draft RMP are not reprinted. The Draft RMP may need to be referred to during review of the Proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP specifies where and under what circumstances particular uses or management activities would be allowed on public lands in the KRNCA and immediately adjacent public lands. The EIS assesses the possible environmental and social effects of implementing the Proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP is a refinement of the Preferred Alternative from the Draft RMP, with consideration given to public comments, corrections made where necessary, and rewording for clarification.

### 1.1 LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

The KRNCA is located along the rugged northern California coast about sixty miles south of Eureka and 200 miles north of San Francisco (see Figure 1-2). An abrupt wall of mountains thrusts 4,000 feet above the Pacific, making the area one of the most spectacular and remote stretches of coastline in the continental U.S. The elemental beauty and ever-changing mood of the Pacific Ocean meeting the wild, undeveloped coastline, old-growth forests and rugged peaks of the King Range inspired the original NCA designation, and continues to draw people from all over the world to visit the "Lost Coast" of California. Visitors pursue a wide variety of activities, including hiking and backpacking eighty miles of trails, camping, beach-combing, surfing, hunting, vehicular touring, and sight-seeing on a 100+ mile network of BLM and county-maintained roads, environmental education, and wildlife viewing. Additional uses involve special forest products collection (mostly wild mushrooms) and livestock grazing by several local ranchers.

The KRNCA was formally recognized on September 21, 1974, with the formal acceptance of the King Range Management Program and a public dedication ceremony held at Shelter Cove. The Management Program detailed management actions for approximately 54,000 acres of public and private lands within the boundaries of the KRNCA. In 1974, 35,000 acres were publicly owned, and 19,000 acres were in private ownership. The Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA, Public Law 94-579) extended the boundary of the KRNCA to its current configuration. Acquisition of private lands within the KRNCA has consolidated public ownership within the area. Currently the area includes

approximately 58,000 acres of public and 6,000 acres of private lands. Numerous parcels of BLM-managed lands also adjoin the boundary of the KRNCA, and are included in the planning area.

The BLM Arcata Field Office is responsible for management of the KRNCA. A project office, staffed by a manager plus resource, fire, and maintenance staff is located on-site in Whitethorn, CA, and is responsible for on-ground management in the KRNCA. The Arcata and King Range staff are responsible for the preparation of the KRNCA Proposed RMP.

### **1.1.1 Planning Area Description**

The formal plan decision area encompasses lands within the Congressionally-designated KRNCA, as well as BLM-managed lands contiguous to the KRNCA and two non-contiguous BLM parcels: one is the site of the KRNCA Project Office/Visitor Center, and the other, the Honeydew Creek Campground. For the purpose of grazing management decisions only, two additional parcels have been incorporated into the planning area. These parcels are identified in Figure 4-7 (see Chapter 4) as the “Etter Lease” and the “Lee French Lease.” Formal decisions in the plan will only apply to these lands. The planning area encompasses roughly 68,000 acres.



*View of the King Range NCA looking north.*

However, a planning “area of influence” will also include the surrounding region stretching from McNutt Gulch near Petrolia in the north to Whale Gulch in the south, including the Mattole River Watershed (see Figure 1-1). The plan will recognize that these nearby lands, communities, resource values, and uses are all affected by management of the KRNCA, and their use/values in turn affect management of the KRNCA. For example, land use decisions in the portion of the Mattole watershed within the KRNCA can affect anadromous fish spawning success for the entire Mattole Watershed. Also, community efforts such as the “Redwoods to the Sea” project, the Mattole Headwaters Ecological Reserve, and the Mill Creek Conservancy Project are encouraging stewardship programs that link the resource values of the KRNCA to these nearby lands. The plan may suggest actions for areas or programs that are not under the BLM’s jurisdiction but directly affect KRNCA management (for example, county road signs, tourism

information programs, etc.). However, final decisions regarding these actions will rest with the appropriate agency or community land stewardship plans/programs. Similarly, actions related to BLM lands outside the KRNCA planning area will be carried forward as recommendations for incorporation into the appropriate BLM plan.

The planning area is in Northern California Coast Ranges Geographic Province and includes about 38 miles of rugged Pacific coastline, extending inland up to seven miles. The spine of the King Range is the most prominent geographic feature, and separates a number of west slope coastal watersheds from the Mattole River, which drains the entire east side of the KRNCA. The 340 square mile Mattole watershed historically has supported significant runs of anadromous fish such as salmon and steelhead. The fishery has been threatened by a variety of human impacts, and local communities are actively working to restore the watershed. Public lands in the KRNCA encompass about twelve percent of this watershed.

## **1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE KING RANGE RMP**

The 1970 King Range Act provides overall guidance, management objectives, and legal mandates that must be incorporated into the RMP process. Section 2(b)(1) states that “that there will be a comprehensive, balanced, and coordinated plan of land use, development, and management of the area, and that such plan will be based on an inventory and evaluation of the available resources and requirements for such resources, and on the topography and other features of the area,” and Section 2(b)(6) requires that the “plan will be reviewed and re-evaluated periodically.” See Appendix A for the specific mandates and management guidelines of the 1970 Act.

The purpose of the King Range RMP process is to evaluate the 1974 Management Program and amendments and reaffirm and reestablish guidance, objectives, policies, and management actions for the KRNCA that reflect current issues, knowledge, and conditions. This planning effort is comprehensive in nature, evaluating existing management plans and resolving or addressing issues within the KRNCA identified through public, interagency, and within-agency scoping efforts. This effort also identifies the area’s mission, long-range management goals, intermediate objectives, and actions and options to meet those objectives.

Several additions and adjustments to the original King Range Management Program have occurred since 1974 as environmental conditions, public needs, and management issues and strategies have changed: rule making has been implemented through publication in the *Federal Register*; activity-level plans have been developed and implemented; and the Northwest Forest Plan (April 1994) amended all public land use management plans in the Pacific Northwest, including the King Range Management Program. An additional plan amendment was made in 1998 to change management of Black Sands Beach to non-motorized use only.

This Proposed RMP analyzes the current management situation and identifies desired future conditions to be maintained or achieved and management actions necessary to achieve objectives. The plan addresses and integrates all existing management plans and programs, including but not limited to: fire management; livestock grazing; threatened and endangered species; recreation and visitor services; watershed management; and travel management. The plan meets stated requirements of the King Range Act.

The following list of specific factors illustrates the need for an updated plan. The existing plan is thirty years old. Many conditions, both social and resource-based, have changed since 1974, including:

- The passage of FLPMA in 1976 expanded the boundaries of the KRNCA and established guidelines, rules, and regulations for the administration and management of public lands. FLPMA also required lands within the KRNCA to be evaluated for wilderness values, and established interim management requirements to protect these values.
- Listing under the 1973 Endangered Species Act of the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, chinook and coho salmon, and steelhead trout, among other species, has significantly affected forest management activities in the Pacific Northwest, including the King Range. Forest management objectives proposed in the 1974 plan are no longer appropriate.
- The 1994 Northwest Forest Plan amended all federal land use plans and established land allocations, standards, and guidelines for management of habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest related species within the range of the northern spotted owl, including the KRNCA.
- The counties in which the KRNCA lies, Humboldt and Mendocino, and the entire State of California have undergone dramatic changes in social and economic conditions since 1974. Locally, the economic base has shifted from mostly resource extraction (particularly timber) to a mixed economy of which tourism is a major component. The population of the two counties continues to grow at a moderate rate. California's population has grown by more than fifty percent since 1974 and is expected to double in the next forty years. Approximately ten million people live within a five hour drive of the KRNCA. Recreation on public lands has changed dramatically over the past thirty years, both in levels of use and kinds of recreational activities, including commercial use, which were not addressed in the 1974 Management Program.
- During the past ten years, local and regional conservation organizations have begun to look to the BLM to acquire lands, or have acquired lands themselves for transfer to the BLM. They are entrusting the BLM to manage these lands to protect significant ecological values and to add to regional biodiversity adjoining and surrounding the KRNCA. The RMP will assess the stewardship of newly acquired lands such as the Mill Creek and Squaw Creek parcels as they relate to the management of the KRNCA.

### 1.3 MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The following mission and vision statements were developed based on the direction, intent, and spirit of the legislation and policies establishing and directing management of the area, the KRNCA's role as a component of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System, and input from the public during the scoping process for the plan:

“The BLM will manage the King Range National Conservation Area to conserve one of America's last wild and undeveloped coastal landscapes for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

Within this vision, the BLM will:

- Provide recreation opportunities that complement the rugged primitive character that makes the area distinctive as California's Lost Coast.
- Provide for use of natural resources in a sustainable manner.
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat, emphasizing species dependent on old-growth forests.
- Provide healthy watersheds for aquatic species, emphasizing anadromous fisheries restoration.
- Respect community values and seek opportunities for local involvement in area conservation and use.

## 1.4 PURPOSE OF THE BLM'S LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS

The land use planning process is the key tool used by the BLM, in coordination with the public, to protect resources and designate uses on public lands managed by the agency. All recent land use plans for public lands managed by the BLM are referred to as "Resource Management Plans." Planning is critical to ensuring a coordinated, consistent approach to managing these lands in accordance with FLPMA and other applicable laws and regulations. Planning efforts are done in accordance with principles of multiple use and sustainability, in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber. Plans are also intended to protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water, and archeological resources. Where appropriate, lands will be managed to preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition to provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals, and to provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use. To accomplish the above, the BLM will (as described in the BLM Land Use Planning Manual):

- Provide on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands, their resources, and other values. This inventory shall be kept current so as to reflect changes in conditions and to identify new and emerging resource and other values (FLPMA, Section 201(a)).
- Use an interdisciplinary process for evaluating resource information that considers physical, cultural, and biological resources in conjunction with social and economic factors to decide appropriate public land uses.
- Ensure opportunities for participation by Indian tribes, State and local governments, other federal agencies, and the public in a way that coordinates land use inventory, planning, and management activities with these other jurisdictional entities. Such participation will help ensure that land use plans for public lands are consistent with the plans and policies of these entities to the maximum extent consistent with federal law (FLPMA, Section 202(c)(9)), and that policies of approved Indian tribal land management programs are considered (FLPMA, Section 202(b)).
- Use collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approaches, to the extent possible, to encourage consistency in planning across different land ownerships and jurisdictions.
- Provide the public with a documented record of land allocations and permissible resource uses and constraints.
- Provide a framework to guide subsequent implementation decisions.

## 1.5 PLANNING PROCESS

### 1.5.1 Planning Process and Schedule

The BLM follows an eight-step planning process as shown in Table 1-1, along with the key timeframes for this RMP.

Table 1-1: BLM Planning Process

BLM PLANNING PROCESS STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME
<b>Step 1 – Planning Issues Identified</b>	Issues and concerns are identified through a scoping process that includes the public, Indian tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments.	Completed December 2002 (see Section 1.6.3 below; also Chapter 6)
<b>Step 2 – Planning Criteria Development</b>	Planning criteria are created to ensure decisions are made to address the issues pertinent to the planning effort. Planning criteria are derived from a variety of sources including applicable laws and regulations, existing management plans, coordination with other agencies' programs, and the results of public and agency scoping. The planning criteria may be updated or changed as planning proceeds.	Completed February 2003 (see Section 1.6.4 below)
<b>Step 3 – Data and Information Collection</b>	Data and information for the resources in the planning area are collected based on the planning criteria.	Completed April 2003
<b>Step 4 – Alternatives Formulation</b>	A range of reasonable management alternatives that address issues identified during scoping is developed.	Completed June 2003
<b>Step 5 – Alternatives Assessment</b>	The estimated environmental effects of each alternative are estimated and analyzed.	Completed August 2003
<b>Step 6 – Preferred Alternative Selection</b>	The alternative that best resolves planning issues is identified as the preferred alternative.	Completed August 2003
<b>Step 7 – Resource Management Plan Selection</b>	First, a Draft RMP/EIS is issued and made available to the public for a review period of ninety calendar days. During this time, the BLM will hold another round of public meetings to gather comments, as well as accepting comments in writing. After comments to the draft document have been received and analyzed, the draft is modified as necessary, and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is published and made available for public review for thirty calendar days. A record of decision (ROD) is signed to approve the Final RMP/EIS.	Draft RMP/EIS: published January 2004  Proposed RMP/Final EIS: published November 2004  ROD: Estimated February 2005
<b>Step 8 – Implementation and Monitoring</b>	Management measures outlined in the approved plan are implemented on the ground, and future monitoring is conducted to test their effectiveness. Changes are made as necessary to achieve desired results.	Ongoing upon approval

### **1.5.2 RMP Implementation and Monitoring**

Development of the RMP constitutes a major federal action and is therefore subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA requires federal agencies to consider environmental consequences in their decision-making processes, so as to protect and enhance the environment through well-informed federal decisions based on sound science. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), including provisions on the content and procedural aspects of the required environmental analysis. The most comprehensive level of analysis is the Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS—the level being applied to the King Range RMP. Development of the alternatives considered in this RMP, and assessment of their effects, is required by NEPA. This document is a joint RMP/EIS and fulfills NEPA requirements, CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA, and the requirements of BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1.

During implementation of the RMP, additional documentation may be required to comply with NEPA, such as environmental assessments (EAs) for site-specific actions. All such documents would be prepared with the appropriate level of public input. Implementing RMP decisions would be monitored continually to ensure successful results. The implementation progress would also be evaluated periodically. RMP amendments would be prepared if a proposed management action was not consistent with the RMP-prescribed decisions. Revisions or amendments to the RMP may be necessary to accommodate changes in resource or user needs, policies, or regulations. An RMP revision involves preparation of a new RMP to replace the existing one. An RMP amendment is initiated by the need to consider monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances, or a proposed action that may result in a change in the scope of resource uses or a change in the terms, conditions, or decisions of the approved plan (43 CFR 1610.5-5).

### **1.5.3 Planning Themes and Priorities**

A planning theme is defined as a matter of general concern or interest regarding resource management activities, the environment, or land uses that together serve to provide a framework for the RMP. These themes were identified through the issues and opportunities voiced during scoping at the beginning of this planning process. Scoping opened with publication of the notice of intent in the *Federal Register* on October 11, 2002 (volume 67, number 198). Media announcements and a planning update mailer requested public input and announced public scoping open houses, held in five cities during November 2002. The formal scoping period ended December 31, 2002, although additional comments were accepted after that date to accommodate mail and e-mail delays caused by a severe winter storm. All comments received by the deadline were compiled, reviewed, and assessed in a scoping report that was published in February 2003. Additional details about the public and agency involvement process are in Chapter 6 of this document.

Based on the scoping comments and public outreach process, the following themes and priorities were identified to help guide the planning process:

#### ***1.5.3.1 Primitive Values/Character***

Public comment revealed a strong consensus that people value the unique primitive character of the King Range landscape and wish to see it maintained unchanged through the next twenty years. Qualities that

contribute to this primitive character include perceptions that the area is wild, relatively roadless and inaccessible, undeveloped, and not crowded. Many commenters indicated that protecting this primitive character is central to their concerns about the area. This priority affects almost every issue in the King Range, even though people differ as to what actions they consider compatible with the area's character and/or what kinds of limits are necessary for its protection.

### ***1.5.3.2 Recreation Use***

Many people identified increasing recreation use levels and associated effects on the King Range as a major concern. People seem worried that the area will be “loved to death,” becoming more crowded and degraded from overuse, and cited a variety of adverse impacts they feel are already taking place. Several ideas for limiting use levels emerged from the scoping process, such as a backcountry permit system, placing use caps on certain areas (particularly the Lost Coast Trail), or otherwise dispersing users throughout the entire KRNCA, rather than concentrating use along the beach. Another suggestion was to limit or discourage large encampments.

Another key issue raised is whether multiple user groups can share trails or sections of the King Range. Some members of the public suggested that only the lowest impact recreation uses, such as hiking, backpacking, or surfing, should be allowed, again citing compatibility with the area's primitive character. Others disagreed, stating that to exclude activities such as equestrian use, mountain biking, and hunting would be unfair—and pointed out that any type of recreation can have high or low impacts on the area, depending on how people conduct themselves. Several pointed to the problems of congestion, trash, and sanitation at some of the backcountry camps as indicating that even backpacking can have negative impacts.

This leads to a third question in this category, concerning the appropriate degree of development for King Range recreation facilities and sites. Some people wanted to see the camps and other recreation sites remain relatively primitive in nature; others preferred improved facilities, either for greater comfort and/or to reduce impacts on the area's resources from overuse (such as informal backcountry camps where the lack of sanitary facilities may be causing contamination of streams from human waste). The construction of temporary driftwood shelters by some visitors also raised some concern from people who feel they detract from the primitive character of the beaches.

### ***1.5.3.3 Travel Management***

There remains some disagreement about the appropriate level of motorized recreation access in the King Range. Some people regard the noise, tracks, and other disruptions from motorized vehicles as incompatible with the primitive character of the area, especially on the beaches. Others suggested that limiting motorized access unfairly excludes certain user groups, particularly older visitors or those with disabilities who may not be physically able to explore much of the King Range under their own power. Questions also were raised as to the appropriateness of motorized watercraft (boats and jet skis) landing on the beaches.

A related issue of how best to maintain the road system and public access in the King Range revolved around the desire some have that the existing network of roads be maintained or improved, including suggestions such as maintaining some of the backcountry roads in a rough condition for four-wheel drive



or OHV users, or paving certain popular roads. Opposing this sentiment were a number of people calling for stricter limits on seasonal use of certain routes, better maintenance to prevent environmental impacts from erosion, or decommissioning some roads completely. There were also concerns about road safety, particularly as visitor levels (and hence traffic levels) have increased in the area.

#### ***1.5.3.4 Education/Interpretation***

There is a large degree of public agreement that interpretation and education programs are important and should continue. Education programs are considered to be a vital link between the King Range and local communities, and the public voiced an interest both in learning more about natural and cultural resources and participating in education programs as volunteers or local experts. Topics of greatest interest or need include natural history, resource management, cultural uses of the landscape by Native Americans, and fire issues.



*Tidepool tours are popular environmental education programs for both visitors and residents.*

#### ***1.5.3.5 Community Support/Involvement***

There was extensive local interest in and support for continued involvement and collaboration with the BLM on various aspects of King Range management, particularly education and restoration projects. However, people also expressed a variety of concerns about socio-economic impacts, with some interested in economic opportunities for local communities, but others cautioning against overdevelopment or becoming “gateway” communities. The plan will need to strike a balance between the issues of economic stability, sustainability, and community character and self-definition.

#### ***1.5.3.6 Resource Conservation and Management***

Ecosystem restoration was a top concern among the public comments received in the scoping process. Many people stressed the importance of reintroducing native species, including the Roosevelt elk, other

fur-bearing species, and native grasses. Of equal importance was an emphasis on removing or preventing the establishment of exotic weed species. Issues pertaining to water, watershed management, and fisheries were also of great interest, reflecting the BLM's established commitment and involvement with salmon restoration and other watershed-level protection efforts within the King Range.

#### ***1.5.3.7 Fire Management***

Participants in the scoping process communicated a clear concern about fire danger in the King Range and the BLM's role in protecting resources and property from damage. Opinions varied as to the degree of aggressiveness necessary for fire prevention and suppression; some advocated maintaining road access and fuels management, others preferred a lighter touch on the land. Worries about the risk of prescribed burns causing damage contrasted with discussions of the benefits in maintaining natural habitat and reducing fuel loads. There seemed to be a strong call for additional fire safety education, both for visitors recreating in the King Range and for residents. Better knowledge is seen as key to better protection.

### **1.5.4 Planning Criteria**

Planning criteria identify the legal, policy, and regulatory constraints that direct or limit BLM's ability to resolve issues. They also help guide the development of alternatives. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable law and regulations, agency guidance, analysis of information pertinent to the planning area, the result of coordination with the public, government agencies, and Native American tribes, and professional judgment.

Draft planning criteria were completed just prior to the open houses held in November 2002, and public comment on the criteria was solicited at those meetings and throughout the scoping process. No comments were received, so the criteria became proposed criteria. They are as follows:

- Recognize the uniqueness of the west slope of the King Range as a primitive backcountry coastline. Decisions will complement or enhance these values.
- Conduct a collaborative process with other federal agencies, state and local governments, private landowners, Native Americans, and others with authority or interest in resources and uses within the King Range. Specifically recognize state and county jurisdiction over wildlife and coastal resources: California Coastal Commission for the intertidal zone; California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for wildlife; Humboldt and Mendocino Counties for search and rescue; and California Department of Forestry (CDF) for fire.
- Comply with FLPMA, NEPA, the 1964 Wilderness Act, the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, the 1970 King Range Act, the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, and other applicable laws and policies.
- Recognize and complement community values in the Lost Coast region.
- Carry forward the zoning concept of the 1974 Management Program, and existing relevant decisions from this plan and its amendments.
- Use best available science and data for planning decisions, and use adaptive management where appropriate.

## 1.6 RELATIONSHIP TO BLM AND OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMS

### 1.6.1 Relationship to BLM Planning Documents

The BLM has three primary levels of land use planning decisions: the RMP level, the activity level, and the site-specific level. This RMP focuses on broad resource objectives and direction, while providing some activity-level guidance and some site-specific decisions. The King Range RMP builds upon a thirty year history of management, planning, and implementation in the KRNCA. Figure 1-3 highlights some of the major plans and policies that have led to the present management of the area.

A complete Plan Evaluation with more detailed descriptions of plans and decisions is available from the BLM Arcata Office upon request. The summary below highlights the major decisions that will be carried forward into the new plan.

#### 1.6.1.1 *Wilderness*

Wilderness studies were completed for all BLM lands as a requirement under Section 603 of FLPMA, and recommendations have been formally submitted from the President to Congress. Therefore, these decisions cannot be changed except by Congressional action. For the KRNCA, approximately 38,000 acres are being managed in two Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) until Congress makes the final wilderness determination through legislative action. BLM can study areas containing wilderness characteristics outside of the existing WSAs (for example, newly acquired lands, or lands where resource conditions have shifted to a higher level of “naturalness,” etc.) as part of the RMP process and will do so in this plan.

#### Rationale

Section 603 of FLPMA directed BLM to study all lands under its jurisdiction and make recommendations to Congress regarding their suitability for wilderness designation. The BLM completed this effort for the King Range in 1988 and the results are published as *Wilderness Recommendations, Arcata Resource Area, King Range WSA (Wilderness Study Area) and Chemise Mountain WSA*.

#### 1.6.1.2 *West Slope Motorized Vehicle Access*

Non-motorized access on the western coastal slope, including the Smith-Etter road west of the Telegraph Ridge Gate, and the beach corridor from the mouth of the Mattole River to Black Sands Beach will be carried forward in the plan. The BLM will reevaluate all other roads identified on the eastern slope (approximately forty miles) as “open, limited, or closed” to vehicle use in the 1986 Transportation Plan. The OHV designations will not affect private inholder access. BLM will continue to work with private inholders on an individual basis regarding their access. Public land acquisitions made since the 1986 Transportation Plan was completed will also be evaluated for vehicle use designations.

#### Rationale

Non-motorized access on the west slope is consistent with years of management in the King Range, the management vision for the King Range, and WSA management requirements, as well as State Coastal Zone management, the King Range Act, area management goals, and the KRNCA RMP planning criteria. Vehicle designations are consistent with BLM Manual Section 8342; they minimize OHV use in

areas with extreme natural or man-made hazards (such as abandoned roads that BLM can no longer maintain) and minimize damage to cultural and natural resources. The designations in the original Transportation Plan are now eighteen years old, and need reevaluation with attention to road safety, appropriate use levels, resource protection, and effectiveness of existing designations.

#### ***1.6.1.3 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP)***

BLM will carry forward the land allocations identified in the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan (late-successional reserves, riparian reserves, matrix, and administratively withdrawn lands<sup>1</sup>) but will evaluate boundaries for potential adjustment. The standards and guidelines outlined in the NWFP will serve as forest land health standards for this plan. The allocation acreage figures for the King Range and adjoining lands are:

- Late-successional reserves: 45,437 acres
- Administratively withdrawn: 15,688 acres
- Matrix: 142 acres (Honeydew Creek Campground parcel)

#### **Rationale**

Consideration of land allocation boundary changes in the plan will allow for implementation of state-of-the-art forest health practices within the guidelines of the NWFP. Any proposed changes would be forwarded through the Forest Plan Regional Ecosystem Office for approval. (Note that the Proposed RMP does not recommend changes in NWFP land allocations.)

#### ***1.6.1.4 Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines***

Statewide standards and guidelines were adopted in 1997 for managing grazing on public lands administered by the BLM in California.

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<sup>1</sup> “Administratively Withdrawn Areas” are areas designated in existing agency plans where management emphasis precludes timber harvest and that are not included in calculations of allowable sale quantity (ASQ). The NWFP specifies that the management guidelines for administratively withdrawn areas apply where they are more restrictive or provide greater benefits to late-successional and old-growth forest-related species than the provisions of the forest plan standards and guidelines. “Late-Successional Reserves” (LSRs) are designated to serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth-related species including northern spotted owl. They are managed to protect and enhance old-growth forest conditions. LSRs, in combination with other allocations and standards and guidelines, maintain a functional, interactive, late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystem. No programmed timber harvest is allowed inside LSRs. “Riparian Reserves” (RRs) are areas along all streams, wetlands, ponds, lakes, and unstable or potentially unstable areas where the conservation of aquatic and riparian-dependent terrestrial resources receives primary emphasis. The main purpose of the reserves is to protect health of the aquatic system and its dependent species; they also provide incidental benefits to upland species. These reserves help maintain and restore riparian structures and functions, benefit fish and riparian-dependent nonfish species, enhance habitat conservation for organisms dependent on the transition zone between upslope and riparian areas, improve travel and dispersal corridors for terrestrial animals and plants, and provide for greater connectivity of late-successional forest habitat. “Matrix” is the federal land outside the categories of designated areas. The matrix includes the forested areas in which most timber harvest and other silvicultural activities will be conducted. The matrix also contains nonforested areas that may be technically unsuited for timber production. See NWFP 1994 for detail.

## **Rationale**

BLM is required by statewide policy to use these standards and guidelines for evaluating rangeland health.

### ***1.6.1.5 1974 King Range Management Program Zones***

The 1974 King Range Management Program divided the NCA into seven management zones (see Figure 2-7), each with a designated primary use. Secondary or collateral uses could occur as long as they complemented or did not detract from the primary use. The original seven zones and their respective primary uses are as follows:

1. “Punta Gorda,” Recreation
2. “West Slope,” Recreation
3. “Shelter Cove,” Residential
4. “Point No Pass,” Recreation
5. “Whale Gulch,” Residential
6. “Bear Creek,” Timber Production
7. “Honeydew Creek,” Wildlife and Fish Habitat

Some of these primary uses are no longer valid based on updated direction in the plan amendments and other decisions, discussed in 1.6.1.1 through 1.6.1.4 above. For example, under the Northwest Forest Plan, Zone 6 is now designated as a Late Successional Reserve, so its primary use is no longer timber production, but protection of late successional forest for wildlife values. The Proposed RMP (see Chapter 4) includes three zones that revise and simplify the original management zones to reflect current resource conditions and management direction. Alternative A (No Action Alternative) in the Draft RMP carries forward the original seven zones. However, the primary uses were only carried forward where they reflect current KRNCA planning direction.

## **1.6.2 Relationship to BLM Programs**

The BLM has established the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) to protect some of the nation’s most remarkable and rugged landscapes. The system includes National Conservation Areas, National Monuments, Wilderness Areas, WSAs, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. The KRNCA is included in the NLCS.

### ***1.6.2.1 California Coastal National Monument***

President Clinton established the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) on January 11, 2000, under the discretionary authority given to the President by Section 2 of the Antiquities Act of 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431).

The purpose of the CCNM, as stated in the Presidential Proclamation, is to protect and manage biological and geological resources by protecting “all unappropriated or unreserved lands and interest in the lands owned or controlled by the United States in the form of islands, rocks, exposed reefs, and pinnacles above mean high tide within 12 nautical miles of the shoreline of the State of California.” The proclamation also functions to elevate California’s offshore lands to a national level of concern, focuses

the primary management vision on the protection of geologic features and habitat for biota, and tasks BLM with the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that protection. In total, the CCNM consists of more than 20,000 offshore rocks and small islands that are spread along the 1,100-mile length of the California coastline and totaling a little more than 1,000 acres. Much of the KRNCA coastline is bordered by offshore rocks that are part of the CCNM.

The BLM is currently developing a resource management plan for the CCNM. This plan addresses five key issues:

- How will biological resources be protected?
- How will geologic, cultural, and visual resources be protected?
- How will BLM coordinate its CCNM planning and management activities to be consistent with the numerous jurisdictions that have existing plans and policies associated with the coastal zone?
- What programs, facilities, infrastructure, and partnerships are needed to provide the public with interpretive and educational material regarding the values and significance of the CCNM?
- How will people's activities and uses along the coast be affected by management of the CCNM?

The rocks and islands making up the CCNM are an important element of the KRNCA coastline. They host a diversity of resource values, providing important habitat for sea birds and marine mammals, and are key elements of the scenic landscape that attracts visitors to the Lost Coast. The on-shore management under the King Range RMP will complement the CCNM RMP and serve to help address the above CCNM planning issues.

The King Range RMP decisions that will most directly impact the CCNM are associated with resource uses such as recreation, interpretation, research, and land use authorizations. The King Range Proposed RMP will adopt the following management direction in addressing resource uses where they interact with the CCNM:

**Recreation:** KRNCA visitors would be encouraged to participate in recreational pursuits that are respectful of the biological, cultural, physical, and scenic values of the CCNM. The health and safety of coastal visitors would also be a central theme in recreation programs promoted by the managing agencies. Recreation activities on or adjacent to the CCNM would be consistent with the primary purpose for which the CCNM was created: protection of monument resources and related values. Accordingly, allowable uses would focus on passive and non-invasive forms of recreation. Uses would be based on providing recreational experiences from the mainland and, to a lesser extent, from the ocean, with limited opportunities to engage in recreation on the monument itself.

**Interpretation and Environmental Education:** The key focus of education and interpretation programs related to the CCNM would be to foster and increase public awareness regarding monument resources to support the core purpose of the monument: resource protection. Points of visitor contact located within the KRNCA adjacent to the CCNM would be designated during plan implementation and would be developed to provide individuals and organizations opportunities for nature study and photography, interpretive sites and walks, school and community outreach programs, and special thematic events related to the unique resources of the CCNM. In the KRNCA, developed interpretive

facilities would be limited to the Shelter Cove Area, as other CCNM resources adjoin Wilderness Study Areas.

**Research:** Coordinate on research projects with the CCNM, state of California, and other entities with jurisdiction and research capabilities to study issues associated with the sea-land interface (i.e., beaches, tidepools, offshore rocks etc.). BLM would encourage research that addresses missing or incomplete data regarding the KRNCA and CCNM's resources and the uses of those resources. Information that relates to the effects of RMP management strategies and provides baseline monitoring to measure changes and effects over time would be sought through both formal research and less structured monitoring. Appropriate scientific studies would be encouraged to increase understanding of human and ecological processes and resources, and to seek to understand the unique values of the coastal zone.

**Land Tenure Adjustments and Land Use Authorizations:** No BLM lands within the KRNCA would be disposed of under the King Range RMP. Any coastal lands acquired under the plan would be managed to be compatible with the CCNM. Permits, rights-of-way, and other land use authorizations would include stipulations to ensure that they are compatible with CCNM plan objectives.

### 1.6.3 Relationship to Other Agencies' Planning Documents

BLM planning regulations require that RMPs be consistent with officially approved resource-related plans of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Native American tribes, so long as those plans are also consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands. Other agencies' plans relevant to the King Range planning area include the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park General Management Plan (under development), Humboldt County General Plan, and the Mendocino County General Plan. In addition, the RMP will be reviewed by the State for consistency with the Coastal Zone Management Act (1972).

This RMP is consistent with the applicable, officially approved resource-related plans of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Native American tribes.

## 1.7 TOPICS NOT ADDRESSED OR BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS PLANNING EFFORT

Several topics identified during the preparation and scoping processes are not addressed in the RMP/EIS, as identified below. Rationale for not addressing them is also noted.

### 1.7.1 Congressional Wilderness Designation

Wilderness designation can only occur through an act of the U.S. Congress. The BLM was directed under the Section 603 of FLPMA to study all lands under its jurisdiction and make recommendations to Congress regarding their suitability for wilderness designation. The BLM completed this effort for the King Range in 1988 with its report, *Wilderness Recommendations, Arcata Resource Area, King Range WSA (Wilderness Study Area) and Chimise Mountain WSA*. The BLM does not have the authority to make the final decision regarding whether to designate these areas as Wilderness, or how much acreage to include under the designation; these decisions require Congressional legislation. All lands in the KRNCA that

meet minimal requirements for wilderness designation are administratively protected as WSAs. The BLM will continue to manage the WSAs to protect their wilderness values until Congress makes a final decision regarding designation.

In addition, the BLM studies areas with wilderness characteristics outside of the existing WSAs (for example, newly acquired lands, or lands where resource conditions have shifted to a higher level of “naturalness,” etc.) as part of the RMP process and will do so under this plan.

### **1.7.2 Motorized Vehicle Use on the Beach**

The decisions to manage the west slope backcountry for non-motorized use will be carried forward as existing decisions and not readdressed in this plan. A rationale for this decision is discussed in Section 1.6.1.2 above.

### **1.7.3 Land Acquisitions Outside of the Immediate King Range Area**

The RMP will identify criteria for land tenure adjustments (acquisition and disposal) on lands both within the King Range and in the immediate King Range area. Other BLM public lands in northwest California are managed under the Arcata Resource Management Plan (RMP) which lists criteria and priorities for acquisitions.

### **1.7.4 Giving Local Residents Priority for Public Access and Contracts**

Plan decisions must provide fair and equitable access to public lands for all citizens, and cannot be discriminatory based on location of residence. Therefore, decisions regarding programs or policies such as recreation use permits, site reservations, commercial permits etc. must be equitable. The same is true for federal contracts, although issuance of contracts is an implementation action and is beyond the scope of the plan.

The Management Plan can incorporate or encourage opportunities for local residents to participate in area management, development of interpretive tours for local schools, provision of facilities for community functions, and other community-based actions.

Also, in implementing the RMP, the BLM will seek opportunities through the federal budget process and other special programs to encourage local community involvement and benefits from King Range management. This has already been done extensively at the King Range. For example, the “Jobs in the Woods” program has allowed for cooperation and funding of local community groups and contractors to complete watershed restoration work.

### **1.7.5 Estuary Water Export**

Water rights or diversions for rivers are under the jurisdiction of the state and are outside the scope of the plan. The plan will address criteria for the issuance of rights-of-way (including those for water pipelines) across public lands in the King Range. Any future diversion proposal that crosses public lands would also require BLM participation in an analysis of environmental impacts under NEPA. The



Proposed RMP also includes objectives for the BLM to apply for water rights to protect public land values.

#### **1.7.6 Private Land (Inholder) Access, Including Air Access to Big Flat**

Access provisions to private inholdings are based on legal rights associated with each parcel and, therefore, are addressed individually with each landowner, and not at a planning level. Access provisions must be consistent with federal laws and policies including the King Range Act.

#### **1.7.7 Offshore Drilling**

Decision-making authority regarding offshore drilling rests with the State of California and the U.S. Government's Mineral Management Service and is not under the authority of the BLM, so it is outside the scope of this plan.

#### **1.7.8 Military Flyovers**

The Department of Defense (DOD) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have jurisdiction over the airspace above the KRNCA. If routine military flights are proposed, the BLM will work administratively with the FAA and DOD at that time to minimize the effects of these flyovers on the area.

#### **1.7.9 Marine Sanctuary**

The plan will not address the formal designation of a coastal fish or marine sanctuary, as intertidal and marine resources are under the jurisdiction of other state and federal agencies including the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Coastal Commission, the State Land Board, and NOAA Fisheries.

### **1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This Proposed RMP/EIS is composed of the following sections:

- Chapter 2, "Changes to the Draft Resource Management Plan," includes a summary table of the alternatives from the Draft RMP/EIS, with description of all changes made for this Proposed RMP/EIS.
- Chapter 3, "Affected Environment," is a description and analysis of the current environmental conditions and management practices in the KRNCA.
- Chapter 4, "Proposed Resource Management Plan," lists the proposed planning goals, objectives, and actions for each major resource area in the KRNCA. This is analogous to the preferred alternative from the Draft RMP/EIS.

- Chapter 5, “Environmental Consequences,” is an analysis of the effects, both beneficial and adverse, of implementation of the management goals, objectives, and actions for the Proposed RMP.
- Chapter 6, “Coordination and Consultation,” describes the processes of gathering public comment and consultation with other agencies and jurisdictions during the development of this RMP. It also includes BLM’s responses to comments, and a list of preparers of this document.
- Chapter 7, “References,” includes a complete bibliography of documents and communications cited, plus a list of acronyms.
- Appendices include appendices that support analyses and conclusions of the planning process.

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